

Criteria for an Equitable School – Equity Audit

An equitable school provides the climate, process, and content which enable students and staff to perform at their highest level. An equitable school ensures successful academic outcomes by providing equitable resources and appropriate instructional strategies for each student. The equitable school:

1. Has a clear mission which is committed to equitable access, processes, treatment, and outcomes for all students, regardless of race, gender, national origin (English Learners), disability, or socioeconomic status.
2. Provides an inclusive visual environment - halls, displays, and classrooms exhibit pictures and information about diverse students and cultures.
3. Reflects and works in collaboration with the various socioeconomic, racial, ethnic, language, gender, and disability groups within the school community.
4. Works in partnership with parents, the business community, and civic and community organizations to enrich the curriculum, provide consistently high expectations for all students, and develop supports and opportunities for all students.

School Policy

CRITERIA/QUESTIONS	NO	YES	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT
1. Does the school/school system have a specific policy regarding educational equity?			
2. Does the policy clearly explain the procedures for reporting complaints, fact finding, and appeals?			
3. Does the school have a clear mission statement regarding educational equity?			
4. Are the policy and mission statement publicized regularly to staff, students, and parents?			
5. Is the policy monitored for consistent and complete implementation as well as any necessary modification?			
6. Has the school developed an equity plan of action based on the policy, mission statement, and analysis of its current equity needs?			
7. Did all component groups: the staff, parents, students, and community participate in the development of the mission statement and equity plan?			
8. Is there an equitable distribution of highly-qualified teachers?			

9. Is there a policy and procedure to assure that no student is denied participation in extracurricular or co-curricular activities because of financial reasons or because of transportation limitations?			
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School Organization/Administration

CRITERIA/QUESTIONS	NO	YES	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT
1. Are school administrator(s) able to identify equity issues, and trained to provide leadership in developing alternative strategies to achieve excellence and equity among staff and students?			
2. Is there a team or advisory committee that coordinates school improvement and assures equity compliance in all phases of school management?			
3. Have interpreters been identified for the varied languages present in the school community?			
4. Are enrollments monitored in special education and gifted and talented programs for disproportionate representation of one racial or ethnic group or by gender?			
5. Is data regularly collected, disaggregated, and analyzed in the following areas and by different ethnic groups? (check all which apply) <input type="checkbox"/> Course level enrollment <input type="checkbox"/> Grade point average/achievement scores <input type="checkbox"/> Standardized test scores <input type="checkbox"/> Student discipline, suspensions, and expulsions <input type="checkbox"/> Cross cultural friction or harassment <input type="checkbox"/> Participation in school activities and honors			
6. Have policies or programs been implemented to respond to this data?			
7. Have curriculum and/or instructional strategies been modified as a result of data analysis combined with anecdotal and other information?			
8. Are the parents, community members, and business people involved in school planning, support, and governance, representative of the school community?			
9. Are values of equity, fairness, and inclusion modeled by all school staff?			

School Climate/Environment

CRITERIA/QUESTIONS	NO	YES	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT
1. Do bulletin boards, displays, hall decorations, classrooms, and offices show males and females, members of varied racial or ethnic groups, and people with disabilities in a variety of roles?			
2. Does the interaction of school staff with each other, students, and parents, convey a respect of people regardless of race, ethnicity, language, gender, disability, age, religion, or socioeconomic status?			
3. Are special efforts made to achieve classroom integration when students self-segregate in the classroom (e.g. teams for contests, groups for instruction, other forms of classroom organization)?			
4. Is the code of student conduct applied fairly and equitably to all students?			
5. Do school assemblies, special programs, and speakers reflect the diverse nature of the school and larger community?			
6. Are the people involved in planning school events and programs representative of the school community by race, ethnicity, language, gender, disability, and socioeconomic status?			
7. Do all segments of the school community attend and participate in school events including athletic, dramatic, service, PTA/PTO, etc.?			
8. Are school emblems, mascots, team names, and other symbols free from racial, ethnic, gender, or disability bias?			
9. Does the library/media center have recent visual, print, and non-print materials which accurately provide information about males and females of varied groups in traditional and non-traditional roles?			
10. Are materials, notices, and other school communication available in multiple languages, Braille, or audio versions as required?			

Staff

CRITERIA/QUESTIONS	NO	YES	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT
1. Are all students talked to in the same manner and held to consistent standards of behavior?			
2. Are discipline infractions and praise distributed equitably in the classroom?			
3. Are students given access to resources, facilities, and academic placement dependent on individual talent, skill and interest?			
4. Are acceptable standards for students' behavior, language, and dress non-			

discriminatory?			
5. Is the composition of the school staff representative of the racial/ethnic/gender/disability composition of the student body and larger school community?			
6. Are staff members of different genders, races, ethnic backgrounds, or disabilities distributed equitably across the various job classifications from administration to noncertified positions?			
7. Are all staff members familiar with the varied demographic groups and neighborhoods in the school?			
8. Do staff members communicate well and on a regular basis with staff members from other ethnic, racial, language, gender or disability groups?			
9. Have all staff members received in-service training to recognize strategies for countering bias?			
10. Are members of the instructional staff able to utilize personalized instructional methods to meet diverse student needs and learning preferences?			
11. When staff members are assessed, are competencies in educational equity an integral part of their performance?			
12. Are people at different job levels, paid or volunteer, treated with comparable respect?			

Assessment/Placement

CRITERIA/QUESTIONS	NO	YES	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT
1. Are multiple instruments used for student assessment, including performance measures?			
2. Is all assessment data analyzed according to individual student progress as well as disaggregated patterns and outcomes by race, gender, ethnicity, disability, socioeconomic status, and geographic location?			
3. Are assessment procedures available which accommodate English Learners and students with disabilities?			
4. Are all levels of classes, including special education, vocational education, and gifted and talented programs, comprised of students who proportionately reflect the diversity within the overall student population?			
5. Is guidance and counseling provided to encourage all students to take higher level courses, particularly in the critical filter areas of Honors, STEM, AP, and IB courses?			

Professional Learning

CRITERIA/QUESTIONS	NO	YES	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT
1. In order to ensure flexible, heterogeneous, and integrated grouping within classes, are teachers exposed to a variety of instructional approaches to meet differing learning preferences and foster both competitive and cooperative skills?			
2. Are relevant equity issues infused throughout all professional learning activities?			
3. Are opportunities provided for staff at all levels and in all job descriptions to obtain in-service training regarding educational equity issues and concerns relevant to specific populations?			
4. Are staff members trained to identify equity needs and to utilize instructional methods to meet the learning preferences of diverse students and groups?			
5. Are in-service opportunities offered to provide dialogues between policy-makers, administrators, teachers, support staff parents, as well as business and community leaders, to develop comprehensive strategies for addressing equity issues?			
6. Are translators or sign language interpreters available for participants in staff development who are from particular language minority or disability groups?			
7. Is content training offered to provide staff with curricular information and knowledge of multicultural print, non-print, and human resources available to enhance educational equity?			
8. Do staff members receive training in cross-cultural communication and group processes to increase their effectiveness in working with diverse populations?			
9. Are critical educational issues addressed in ways that do not stereotype or stigmatize particular groups?			
10. Are presenters and facilitators of in-service programs representative of the gender, racial, ethnic, and disability composition of the school system?			
11. Is professional learning delivered in ways which model techniques and authentic perspectives which are relevant to the diverse groups in the school community?			

Standards and Curriculum Development

CRITERIA/QUESTIONS	NO	YES	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT
1. Are all teachers involved in curriculum development to meet standards?			
2. Are all students held to the same standards?			
3. Are the policy and instructional modifications put in place when students are unable to meet the standards?			
4. Does the curriculum utilize print and non-print materials that represent diverse groups?			
5. Do recommended textbooks and other instructional materials reflect, as much as possible, the experiences and perspectives of both genders and different cultural groups?			
6. Are the teachers' classroom activities and examples multicultural according to race, ethnicity, language, gender and disability?			
7. Does the teacher use classroom lessons to increase awareness and counter the past effects of bias and discrimination?			
8. Do the curricula infuse culturally responsive information into instructional approaches and prepare students for a diverse society and workplace?			
9. Are people with disabilities shown in the curriculum actively interacting with both people with and without disabilities?			
10. Is language used which does not stereotype people or groups?			
11. Does the curriculum suggest ways to examine the perspectives and contributions of people of color and women in every subject area, especially in Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, History, and English?			
12. Are teachers encouraged to use and provide examples of materials produced by women, people of color, and people with disabilities as part of the curriculum?			
13. Are lists and descriptions of resources (e.g. community organizations, parent volunteers, events, historical sites, etc.) provided to reinforce curriculum relevant to the experiences and contributions of diverse cultural groups?			

Disclaimer

The Mid-Atlantic Equity Center is committed to the sharing of information regarding issues of equity in education. The contents of this practitioner brief were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. However, these contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the federal government.